

Downers Grove Grade School
District 58

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



We *Envision.* We *Seek.* We *Believe.*





2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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Superintendent's Greeting



Dear District 58 Community,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about our school district through this Annual Report. District 58 accomplished a tremendous amount of work during the 2023–24 school year, thanks to the commitment and support of our staff, families and the broader community. We always strive to keep our students' best interests at the heart of everything we do, and I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved. During this past school year, District 58:

- Adopted a new Strategic Plan that focuses on five major goals
- Started referendum construction on Herrick, O'Neill, Henry Puffer, Highland, Hillcrest and Whittier schools
- Increased achievement on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness
- Implemented free full-day kindergarten
- Expanded the Dual Language Program
- Joined a new athletic conference that will provide more opportunities for students
- Expanded special education offerings
- Implemented a new writing curriculum
- Piloted and adopted English-language arts curriculum resources for all grade levels
- Enhanced social-emotional learning with the Zones of Regulation curriculum
- Partnered with ReferralGPS Care Navigator to provide mental health referrals at no cost to staff and families
- Provided boxed lunch options at all elementary schools
- Replaced playgrounds at Belle Aire, Pierce Downer, Fairmount, Henry Puffer, Indian Trail, Kingsley and Lester and improved the playground at Hillcrest
- Made improvements to the gifted program, following a comprehensive review
- Enhanced the District's safety and security protocols aligned with best practices and in concert with local law enforcement

Thank you for your partnership, as we work together to provide the best learning experiences for our students. I am privileged and honored to serve District 58 and look forward to the school year ahead!

Sincerely,

Dr. Kevin B. Russell | Superintendent

Board of Education



The District 58 Board of Education holds monthly public business meetings, typically on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at the new Downers Grove Civic Center or a District facility. Access information about the Board's meeting agendas, committees, policies, meeting minutes and more by visiting **www.dg58.org** and selecting the "School Board" tab. Contact the Board, via Secretary Melissa Jerves, at 630-719-5803 or **boe@dg58.org**.

The District 58 Board of Education, from left to right: Kirat Doshi, Melissa Ellis, Tracy Weiner, Vice President Gregory Harris, Emily Hanus, Steven Olczyk and President Darren Hughes

About District 58

MISSION

The mission of District 58, in partnership with parents and community, is to challenge and engage each child by providing quality educational programs and support services in a safe, nurturing and child-centered environment in order to prepare all students to be life-long learners and contributing members of a global society.

CORE BELIEFS

- Each student is capable of learning and deserves to be educated and challenged to reach his/her highest potential.
- Education is the foundation for success, both in academic achievement and social emotional development.
- Within each child, we will cultivate the social awareness, self-management and responsible decision-making skills necessary to be a contributing member of society.
- Educators, students, families and community members should work together to support the healthy development of all students.
- The school environment should be stimulating and engaging, with opportunities for creative, collaborative and meaningful learning experiences.
- The school environment should be safe, friendly and nurturing, where everyone comes to learn, grow and develop.

VISION

We Envision a school district that inspires children, sparks creative and innovative thinking, celebrates diversity, and builds visionaries.

We Seek an education that excites, engages, challenges and prepares our children for life.

We Believe every child should be empowered to achieve and grow in order to embrace the challenges of the future in a global environment.

As part of the Strategic Planning process, the Mission, Core Beliefs and Vision were reviewed. The Vision was updated to reflect current thinking.

“D58 does an excellent job of making the school feel like a community for the kids and parents, focusing on overall education—academic, social, physical, etc.”

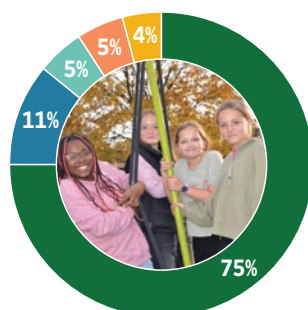
PARENT/GUARDIAN OF STUDENT
2023-24 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
SURVEY COMMENT



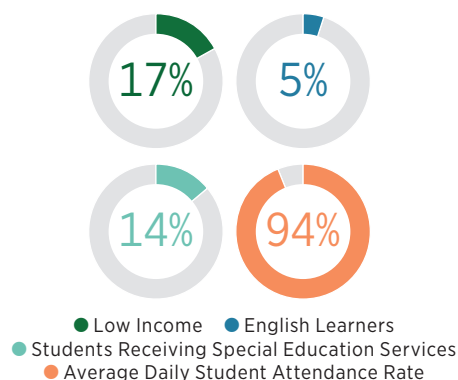
District 58 at a Glance

4,843  **Student Enrollment**

Students live in 7 towns in District 58:
Downers Grove, Darien, Lisle, Lombard, Oak Brook, Westmont and Woodridge



● White ● Hispanic ● Asian
● Two or More Races ● Black



● Low Income ● English Learners
● Students Receiving Special Education Services
● Average Daily Student Attendance Rate

1902

The Downers Grove Township School District was designated **District 58**

640

Staff Members — nearly half live in Downers Grove!

10

Average District 58 Teaching Experience in Years

62%

of Teachers Have a Master's Degree or Higher

93%

Teacher Retention Rate

11

Elementary Schools

2

Middle Schools

2

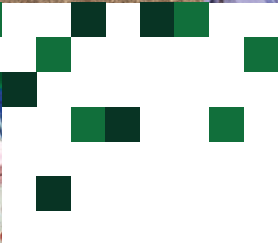
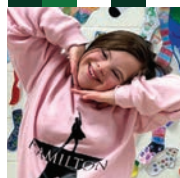
Preschool Locations



Strategic Plan

A Continuous Improvement Process

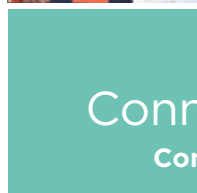
In November 2023, after a five-month community engagement process, the Board of Education adopted a new Strategic Plan. The plan builds on the success of the retiring 2018–2023 Strategic Plan by continuing three existing goals (#1–3) and adding two more goals (#4–5):



GOAL 1

Focusing on Learning

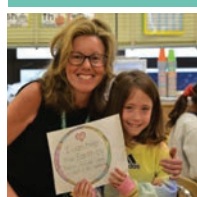
Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction



GOAL 2

Connecting the Community

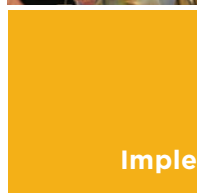
Communication and Community Relations



GOAL 3

Securing the Future

Finance and Facilities



GOAL 4

Building for Success

Implementing the New PK-5 and 6-8 Models



GOAL 5

Cultivating Talent

Personnel, Stakeholders and Students

“District 58 is very good at communication and improving the quality/structure of schools.”

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF STUDENT
2023-24 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
SURVEY COMMENT

Additionally, each goal has five related objectives. The community engagement process played a central role in shaping the collective goals and their objectives. Thus, the plan reflects the needs, hopes and dreams of the District 58 school community over the next five years. Using the goals and objectives, staff developed detailed action plans that are attainable and measurable. Councils and committees work on planning and implementing those action plans throughout the year. Progress on the action plans are reported quarterly at District Leadership Team meetings and at Board of Education meetings. Learn more at www.dg58.org/about/strategic-plan.



GOAL 1

Focusing on Learning

Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction

New Writing Curriculum

Students experienced a new writing curriculum in 2023–24 that not only improved test scores but also renewed energy, focus and motivation around writing.

“The excitement my students have for writing is like night and day,” said Alyssa Reinholtz, Fairmount fourth-grade teacher, of the new curriculum.

The curriculum is called Schoolwide Writing Fundamentals, and students are exposed to a Writing Workshop model that focuses on what it means to be a writer, engages them in topics that interest them and celebrates them as writers. Students enjoy a dynamic writing experience, in which they learn how to hook readers, edit their writing, and share their work with classmates.

As one second grader said, “I used to write one page; now I write books!”

In the Workshop model, students learn different skills each day related to writing and practice applying those skills.

“You can see the pride and joy on their faces when they complete a project,” said Reinholtz.

Teachers received ongoing professional training on the new Schoolwide resource prior to and during implementation.

Full-Day Kindergarten

District 58 launched a free full-day kindergarten program in 2023. Previously, District 58 offered a traditional half-day kindergarten program in the morning that covered all kindergarten curriculum, as well as a tuition-based afternoon enrichment program. The new full-day kindergarten program spreads the curriculum throughout the day, giving students more time to delve into learning experiences.

“Our full-day kindergarten program gives kids more time to learn critical academic, social and emotional skills in a structured setting,” said Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Liz Ehrhart. “Teachers can also dig deeper into their lessons, and students enjoy more play-based learning and peer interactions.”

Learn more about kindergarten in District 58 at www.dg58.org/kindergarten.

Expanded Dual Language Program

District 58 has offered a Dual Language Program for native Spanish speakers since 2014. In 2022, the District began a Two-Way Dual Language Program for native English- and Spanish-speaking kindergarteners. Since then, this two-way program has expanded by one grade level each year, and next year will be offered to students in grades K–2.

Dual language students will experience new English-Language Arts resources next year, including Estrellita and Lunita Fonética (Grades K–2) and UFLI Foundations (Grades K–2), which will expose students to more visual and auditory drills, songs and multi-sensory skills to learn Spanish and English phonics and reading; Benchmark Adelante 2023 & Benchmark Advance 2022 (Grades K–5), which will work together to build a bridge between both languages and build students’ bilingual trajectory; and Galeria (Grades 6–8), which will provide students access to engaging videos, authentic texts and activities to expand their listening, reading, speaking and writing, as well as Spanish-related culture.

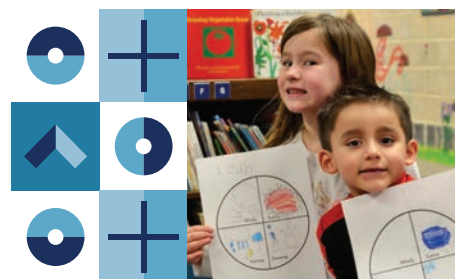
Social-Emotional Learning

Students in grades K–4 were introduced to the Zones of Regulation in the spring, a curriculum that helps students gain skills in regulating emotions and behavior. Funded by a grant, the program will be fully implemented in the fall. Zones of Regulation will help students build problem-solving skills, identify and recognize emotions, and regulate and manage their behavior.



“The district hires amazing teachers that care so much about our children. I appreciate the school environment so much; my kids love going to school.”

**PARENT/GUARDIAN OF STUDENT
2023–24 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
SURVEY COMMENT**



Learning by the Numbers

100%

of District 58 schools earned either an Exemplary or Commendable academic rating from the state of Illinois.

3 years:

District 58 has increased its overall performance on the IAR state assessment for three consecutive years.

9 years:

For the ninth straight year, Grove Children's Preschool earned a Gold Rating from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). It is the highest state honor that a preschool can receive.

90th percentile:

District 58 students performed better than 90% of Illinois school districts in English-Language Arts on the IAR.

94th percentile:

District 58 students performed better than 94% of Illinois school districts in Math on the IAR.



New ELA Curriculum for 2024–25

District 58 will implement a new English-Language Arts (ELA) curriculum in 2024–25 for all grade levels that aligns with the State's new, more rigorous literacy standards. Throughout 2023–24, teachers piloted multiple resources to determine the best fit for District 58. Following the pilot, there was a review of student achievement data and feedback through surveys of the pilot teachers. The following resources will be implemented:

- **UFLI Foundations (Grades K–2):** It includes visual and auditory drills, spelling, and multi-sensory skills that all build on past skills.
- **Benchmark 2022 (Grades K–5):** The resource builds knowledge throughout the text. Students also preview vocabulary, and are introduced to small group lessons and more multicultural stories.
- **CommonLit 360 (Grades 6–8):** The resource is very rigorous, flexible and intentionally designed with thematic, engaging units for these grade levels.

Science Curriculum Review

The District will continue its ongoing curricular review as part of its continuous improvement cycle. Next up is the science curriculum. The first year (2024–25) is a review of the current resources and review of other science resources, then determining if a pilot of different science resources is needed. The comprehensive process takes two-to-three years depending on whether a pilot year is needed.

Fourth Grade Gifted Curriculum

The gifted program for fourth graders will shift to the students' home school in 2024–25. Previously, students had been bused to Henry Puffer one day a week for day-long gifted instruction. Students will receive gifted instruction by the school's teacher librarian. In 2024–25, the Gifted Committee will evaluate the criteria and identification process for the gifted program, assess the new model, and build units for then-fifth graders to implement the following year.

Results

District 58 is committed to accountability. The District tracks student academic progress using key performance indicators (KPIs) and related metrics and benchmarks. This helps District 58 ensure that its curriculum and resources are effective. The first two KPIs are Academic Proficiency and Academic Growth.

The Illinois Assessment of Readiness, or IAR, is a primary source of data for these KPIs. The IAR is a state exam that all District 58 third-through-eighth graders take in the spring.

The Academic Proficiency indicator measures how well students perform in Reading and Math on the IAR. On the 2023 IAR, District 58 third-through-eighth graders, as a whole, performed better than 90% of Illinois school districts in Reading and better than 94% in Math.

“This is a pretty incredible achievement,”

SAID SUPERINTENDENT DR. KEVIN RUSSELL.

He also cautioned that these are data points in time and “we shouldn't over-celebrate but we want to acknowledge the good work that has been done.”

The IAR also reported high growth among District 58 students. The Academic Growth indicator measures the degree to which students are demonstrating personal growth on objective assessments. On the 2023 IAR, a majority of District 58 students met or exceeded their personalized growth projections. Personalized projections are set using a student's prior assessment history to project his/her most probable score on an assessment.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) annually publishes a report card for every Illinois school district, evaluating districts on several academic indicators. ISBE uses data from these indicators to give each school a rating. In 2023, all District 58 schools earned either an Exemplary or Commendable rating, ISBE's highest designations.

GOAL 2

Connecting the Community

Communication and Community Relations

Glenbard Parent Series Partnership

District 58 announced a new partnership with the Glenbard Parent Series (GPS) to bring nationally renowned speakers and experts on parenting and education to District 58 families. This initiative is a direct response to the desire from the District's parent community for more resources and guidance on navigating the complexities of raising and educating children in today's world.

"By joining forces with GPS, we are bringing the best and brightest minds in parenting and education directly to our community," Superintendent Dr. Kevin Russell explained. "This is an incredible opportunity for our parents to gain valuable insights and practical advice from nationally acclaimed speakers."

The Glenbard Parent Series is well-known for its engaging and relevant presentations by leaders and authors who are experts in their fields. The series includes thought-provoking talks on a variety of topics, such as adolescent psychology, the importance of resilience and failure, and building empathy in children. Events are free. Presentations are virtual or local. Upcoming speakers in September 2024 include:

DR. BECKY KENNEDY —WITH— AUTHOR, LORI GOTTLIEB

Good Inside: A Guide to Becoming the Parent You Want to Be

VIRTUAL EVENT, NOON & 7 P.M. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

DR. ALI MATTU

Anxiety and Stress Reduction Strategies for Teens and Adults

HYBRID EVENT: IN-PERSON AT THE COLLEGE OF DUPAGE AT NOON & VIRTUAL EVENT AT 7 P.M. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

View upcoming presentations and learn more at www.gpsparentseries.org.

Library Cards for All Students

The Board approved an intergovernmental agreement with the Downers Grove Public Library that will provide a library card to every District 58 student whether or not they live in Downers Grove. Some District 58 students live in unincorporated Downers Grove, as well as other municipalities, such as Woodridge, Westmont and Oak Brook. Specifically, the intergovernmental agreement allows the District to share student identification numbers with the library. During the District 58 registration process, parents are asked if they would like to opt into the program. Data will not be shared with the library and cards will not be created for students without parental consent.

Parent and Guardian School Environment Survey

District 58 annually administers a school environment survey to parents and guardians in late winter. This year, 1,045 parents/guardians responded to the survey. Survey results showed overall high satisfaction and, of 19 questions, 17 showed increases. For example, the chart below shows the percentage of parents who answered "always" or "usually" to the following statements.

Statement	2022	2023	2024
"If my child is injured or not feeling well, an adult at school helps him/her."	95%	95%	97%
"My child is cared for by the adults at this school."	92%	93%	94%
"Adults at this school believe that my child can be a success."	94%	94%	94%
"My child's teacher is welcoming and interested in what I have to say."	92%	92%	93%
"My child's school welcomes parents to school events and activities."	89%	90%	92%
"My child's school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn."	88%	91%	92%



"The team gives great feedback about our son's status and what to work on. We are very happy with that dialogue and the engagement of the team in general!"

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF STUDENT
2023-24 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
SURVEY COMMENT



Communication by the Numbers

165,000

unique visitors to www.dg58.org during the 2023–24 school year

8,700

Communicate 58 newsletter subscribers

71%

average Communicate 58 open rate (42% is industry average)

5,251

Facebook followers

3,226

X (formerly Twitter) followers

1,660

YouTube followers

88%

District 58 families say that they generally feel well-informed about District 58.

Source: 2024 District 58 Communication Survey

“The communication is wonderful and I feel informed as a parent about the district and school happenings.”

**PARENT/GUARDIAN OF STUDENT
2023–24 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
SURVEY COMMENT**

Keep Up to Date with District 58



SCAN ME!

Subscribe to **Communicate 58**, the biweekly District 58 newsletter



Website

Visit www.dg58.org for District 58 and school news.



Facebook

View District 58 photos, videos and stories at www.facebook.com/district58.



X (formerly Twitter)

Follow District 58 on X at www.x.com/DGDistrict58. Plus, check out hashtags [#dg58pride](https://twitter.com/hashtag/dg58pride) and [#dg58learns](https://twitter.com/hashtag/dg58learns) to see what's happening in classrooms and schools!



YouTube

View concerts, events, School Board meetings and more at www.youtube.com/DownersGrove58.



Oktoberfest is Sept. 13-14!

Please save the date to attend Oktoberfest, an annual community-wide festival with live music, a kids zone and authentic Oktoberfest fare in a traditional German atmosphere. All event proceeds will benefit the Downers Grove School District 58 Education Foundation. Visit dgoktoberfest.org for tickets and information.

How District 58 Communicates Referendum Construction

District 58 regularly shares referendum construction progress updates with the community via a variety of ways. District 58's Building for Success website can be accessed at www.dg58.org/building-for-success and features the following referendum construction-related information:

- Construction updates
- Schematic designs
- Live construction webcams at both middle schools
- Accountability measures
- Construction timelines and project lists for each school
- Sustainability measures
- Historic construction, facility and referendum information

Additionally, construction updates are given at quarterly District Leadership Team (DLT) meetings. The DLT is the oversight committee of the Strategic Plan. And, regular updates are provided at monthly Board of Education meetings. Also, neighbors of Herrick and O'Neill middle schools are invited to attend monthly meetings with the construction contractor Bulley & Andrews to learn more about milestone dates, construction traffic and work hours, and to answer any questions related to onsite construction. No RSVP is needed to attend.

Monthly Neighborhood Construction Meetings

Herrick

The last Friday of the month at 9 a.m. at the site trailer

O'Neill

The last Friday of the month at 10 a.m. at the site trailer

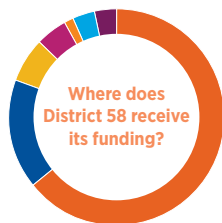
GOAL 3

Securing the Future

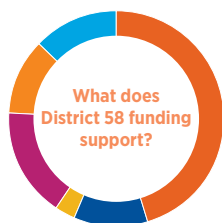
Finance and Facilities

Finances

District 58 Revenues and Expenses



Residential Property Taxes	64.4%
Non-Residential Property Taxes	16.5%
Other Local Funding	6.6%
General State Funding	4.7%
Special Education State Reimbursement	1.5%
Other State Funding	3.2%
Federal Funding	3.3%



Salaries	45.3%
Benefits	11.3%
Supplies/Materials	2.8%
Purchased Services	16.4%
Capital Projects	11.5%
Other/Tuition/Debt Service	12.6%

Source: 2023–24 District 58 budget (prior to audit adjustment)

District 58 Spending per Student

Comparison with Benchmark School Districts

Bloomington 93	\$22,474
West Chicago 33	\$21,410
Hinsdale 181	\$21,228
Marquardt 15	\$20,077
DuPage 45	\$19,655
Lombard 44	\$19,436
Downers Grove 58	\$18,526
Woodridge 68	\$18,493
Queen Bee 16	\$18,387
Glen Ellyn 89	\$16,726
Bensenville 2	\$16,674
Glen Ellyn 41	\$16,581
Addison 4	\$15,417

Source: ISBE's FY2023 Operating Expense per Pupil Report

District 58 Property Tax Rates

Comparison with Benchmark School Districts

Queen Bee 16	4.83
Marquardt 15	4.70
West Chicago 33	4.41
Bloomington 93	4.25
Woodridge 68	4.18
Bensenville 2	3.97
Lombard 44	3.88
Glen Ellyn 89	3.70
DuPage 45	3.58
Glen Ellyn 41	3.46
Hinsdale 181	2.56
Downers Grove 58	2.32
Addison 4	2.24

Source: 2023 DuPage County Tax Rate Booklet

Teacher Contract Approved

The Board of Education unanimously approved a new three-year collective bargaining agreement with the Downers Grove Elementary Education Association (DGEAA) in June using a new interest-based bargaining process. The new contract increases the base salary for teachers by an average of 2.85% over three years, with additional raises based upon teachers' advancement on the salary schedule, which will average 4.5% in the first year. The contract aligns with the District's five-year financial forecast, and the shorter contract length of three years assures that the District can more accurately project revenue growth.

Finance by the Numbers

The District holds a

commendable Aa1 rating

by Moody's Investor Services and

AA

from S&P Global Ratings.

In FY23, District 58 spent \$18,526 per student, which is

less than state average.

Source: ISBE FY2023 Operating Expense per Pupil Report

District 58 adopted a five-year financial plan that includes setting aside 35% for reserves as part of the Board's fund balance policy.

District 58 has earned the

State's highest financial strength rating every year

since its rating system began in 2003.

District 58 is tax capped.

That means that District 58 cannot increase local revenues more than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5%,

whichever is less.





Herrick Middle School student representatives speak during the school's groundbreaking ceremony.

Facilities

Construction Begins

Construction began this spring on six school improvement and renovation projects as part of the successful 2022 referendum. This work will make the District's buildings safer and more secure, extend the useful life of these aging facilities, reduce emergency repairs and enhance ADA accessibility. Moving sixth graders to the middle schools beginning in the fall of 2026 will free up space in the elementary schools and improve the middle school experience. Please visit www.dg58.org/building-for-success to learn more.



District 58 School Board members participated in both middle schools' groundbreaking ceremonies. Here, they celebrated Herrick's groundbreaking on April 22, 2024.



O'Neill administrators, teachers, students and even a retiree joined the school's groundbreaking ceremony on April 22, 2024.



O'Neill Principal Lauryn Humphris and O'Neill student representatives participated at the school's groundbreaking.

A Summary of Plans and Progress

Middle Schools — To Be Completed 2026

Work on the additions at Herrick and O'Neill middle schools began in the spring of 2024 and will be completed in summer 2025 so students and staff can move into the new spaces to allow for the remainder of the renovations in the older section of the buildings. The entire project will be completed in 2026. Additions will include classrooms for sixth graders (who are moving from the elementary schools), science labs, exploratory spaces (music, art, and family and consumer science), a gym that will double as a storm shelter, locker rooms and fitness spaces. The work will also include the expansion/remodeling of cafeterias and kitchen additions, a renovated library and bathroom renovations. There will be air conditioning added, HVAC improvements and mechanical/electrical upgrades completed as needed. State-mandated repairs also will be performed and new more secure entrances added.

Phase I Elementary Schools — Henry Puffer, Highland, Hillcrest and Whittier — To Be Completed Fall 2024

Construction started this summer to create more secure vestibules; replace outdated mechanical, plumbing and electrical; and install new HVAC systems and air conditioning. State-mandated repairs such as new clocks, PA systems, doors/hardware and fire alarms will also be done. District 58's remaining seven elementary schools will see improvements during future construction phases in the summers of 2025 and 2026.

Thank You!

District 58 is grateful to the community for their support in building a better tomorrow for students with updated, modern schools. On Nov. 8, 2022, the District 58 community voted to repair and improve District 58's 13 school facilities by selling \$179 million in bonds.

New District 58 Administrative Office Location

District 58 will move its administrative offices into the shared Downers Grove Civic Center this fall. The District entered a partnership with the Village of Downers Grove to lease office space in the Civic Center for 50 years following the sale of the shuttered Longfellow School and the repurposing of the Administrative Service Center (ASC) on 63rd Street as a storage and maintenance center. The combined use of resources will have significant long-term savings for the community.

“The board would like to thank the community for entrusting us with the first district-wide capital project since we built the majority of our schools during the post-World War II baby boom.”

DARREN HUGHES
BOARD OF EDUCATION
PRESIDENT

Playgrounds Upgraded

Work is near the finish line in replacing or upgrading all 11 District 58 playgrounds. In 2023, with significant state funding, the District was able to replace all or some of the playgrounds at Belle Aire, Pierce Downer, Fairmount, Henry Puffer, Indian Trail, Kingsley and Lester and improve the playground at Hillcrest with rubber resurfacing.

District 58's long-term goal has been to improve and renovate all of its playgrounds and ensure that they are safe, accessible and modernized. For schools with older existing playgrounds, the work included complete playground replacements and/or updating antiquated equipment. For schools with newer playgrounds, minor improvements and additions were added. With some state funding remaining, some enhancement work remains.

The work was funded by a combination of \$1.6 million in state grants, District 58 funding, PTA support, community fundraising and in some cases parent/staff help with labor and installation. The playgrounds are designed to help children develop important motor, social and emotional skills as well as promote physical fitness. All playgrounds are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Safety Enhancements: ALICE Training in District 58

The safety of our students and staff is paramount. To uphold this commitment, District 58 has implemented ALICE training, a comprehensive approach designed to prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

What Is ALICE?

ALICE stands for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate, and represents a flexible set of strategies rather than a strict sequence of actions. Each component is tailored to be employed as needed:

- **Alert:** Being aware of a threat and notifying others promptly
- **Lockdown:** Securing oneself in a safe area to prevent access by a threat
- **Inform:** Continuously communicating real-time information to all parties involved
- **Counter:** Taking actions to disrupt or incapacitate a threat if necessary
- **Evacuate:** Safely removing oneself and others from the danger zone

All staff have been provided ongoing detailed training in ALICE. Students received the training in an age-appropriate manner beginning in the fall of 2023.

Why ALICE?

ALICE is recognized as a best practice in the field of school safety. It is endorsed by the Downers Grove Police Department (DGPD) and the Regional Office of Education (ROE). District 58's adoption of ALICE aligns with the protocols of District 99, other local school districts, the ROE and the DGPD. By integrating ALICE training, District 58 ensures a standardized and proven approach to handling emergencies, thereby enhancing the safety and preparedness of the entire school community.



“ALICE training helps us intentionally and proactively improve our safety measures in order to provide the safest possible environment for our students and staff.”

DR. KEVIN RUSSELL
SUPERINTENDENT



GOAL 4

Building for Success

Implementing the New PK-5 and 6-8 Models



The Strategic Plan's fourth goal, Building for Success, contains five objectives. District 58 began work on this goal's first two objectives shortly after the Strategic Plan was approved last fall. Here are updates on this work.

Preparing for a Smooth Transition

Objective 4.1 is: "District 58 will work to ensure smooth transitions to a 6-8 middle school model for all stakeholders, especially in the first year of transition."

District 58 is on track to move sixth grade to the middle school at the start of the 2026-27 school year. This past year, the Building for Success Steering Committee conducted extensive research on effective middle schools, collected survey data from sixth grade staff on their interests in moving to the middle schools, created common vocabulary and arranged professional learning sessions on the middle school model. They also formed subcommittees to study staffing and scheduling, and made timelines to develop action steps. The subcommittees reviewed the current schedule, identified benefits and areas of improvement, and began planning for the transition of sixth graders to the buildings. The committee also scheduled site visits to other middle schools. Updates and plans are shared with both middle school staff.

Elementary Building Utilization Study Completed

Objective 4.2 is: "In order to ensure equitable access to curricular, programmatic and instructional resources, District 58 should examine school boundaries based on building utilization."

The District conducted an elementary building utilization study to determine how every space is used and to collect feedback on elementary school building priorities. The information is being reviewed, and improvements will be recommended to ensure all schools have equitable access to resources.

"The District does a great job of educating all aspects of child development. Creating good people and good citizens."

PARENT/GUARDIAN OF STUDENT
2023-24 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
SURVEY COMMENT

GOAL 5

Cultivating Talent

Maximizing the Potential of Students, Staff, and Families



The Strategic Plan's fifth goal also contains five objectives, and the District started work on the first two this past school year. Here are updates on this work:

Examining District 58's Staffing Practices and Structures

Objective 5.1 is: "District 58 will analyze and explore our existing and potential staffing practices and structures in order to achieve more equitable experiences for all students."

District 58's Resources Review Council started District 58's Objective 5.1 work by reviewing existing staffing and hiring practices. They determined the need to more clearly communicate the staff allocation process for academic support across the District's 13 buildings. The council also implemented a comparison process between spring enrollment projections and actual fall student enrollment to ensure that planning effectively aligned with demands.

Expanding Equitable Opportunities

Objective 5.2 is: "District 58 will review, expand and support equitable opportunities for students to explore and develop their individual talents."

This objective is centered on reviewing, expanding and supporting opportunities for students to explore and develop their individual talents. The District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) analyzed demographic data related to student participation in programs such as acceleration and gifted education. They also launched surveys to gather feedback on participation in extracurricular activities, interest in new offerings and potential barriers to participation. Based on the results, groups of interested staff and families may be formed to explore the feasibility of increasing program offerings.

New Athletic Conference

Herrick and O'Neill middle school students will have more opportunities for athletics and clubs, thanks to joining a new athletic conference. The Board in November approved the move to the Southeast DuPage Elementary Athletic Association (SDEAA) for the 2024-25 school year. The SDEAA has more sports and activities available to its member districts, such as soccer, chess and Scholastic Bowl. Another benefit is that the schools in SDEAA include all District 99 feeder schools and are therefore geographically closer for families, staff and students traveling to events.

School Spotlights

Building a Community

In District 58, fostering a sense of community is an overarching goal that positively impacts students' academic motivation, behavior and social-emotional development.

When students feel a strong sense of belonging, they are more engaged and motivated in their academic pursuits. They take greater interest in their studies, participate more actively in class discussions, and strive to achieve their personal best. This academic enthusiasm is nurtured by the supportive and inclusive environment that a strong community provides and where students feel valued and understood.

Additionally, a strong school community creates a positive school climate and promotes positive and altruistic behavior among students. When students are part of a close-knit group, research shows they are more likely to act with integrity and kindness. They learn the importance of helping others, respecting differences, and making positive contributions to their community. These ethical values become ingrained in their character, guiding their actions both inside and outside the classroom.

Social and emotional competencies also flourish in a community-centered school environment. Students develop essential skills such as empathy, communication and teamwork. They learn to navigate social interactions with confidence, understand and manage their emotions and build strong, healthy relationships. These competencies are critical for their well-being and future success, preparing them to handle life's challenges with resilience and grace.

Here are just a few examples of how our schools are developing communities. Whether it's through programs and initiatives that bring students, teachers, and families together, fostering connections and a shared sense of purpose or collaborative projects like Watch D.O.G.S. or a book study and community service, our schools are creating opportunities for everyone to contribute and feel connected.



Belle Aire **Monthly Meetings**

Belle Aire focuses on building meaningful relationships, which help connect students to their classrooms and school. Belle Aire's monthly all-school meetings provide a great opportunity for the entire school to gather together to set goals, celebrate successes and recognize students for their respectful, responsible and safe behavior.



Grove Children's Preschool **Peer Buddies**

Grove Children's Preschool invited students with strong social-emotional, play and language skills to interact with students in the special education preschool classrooms. These interactions encouraged preschoolers to emulate their peer buddies, leading to a more positive classroom environment.



El Sierra **100,000 Minutes of Reading**

El Sierra set a schoolwide goal to read 100,000 minutes in March. Students kept a reading log and tracked schoolwide progress on a centrally-located temperature chart. When they met their goal, they celebrated with fun schoolwide experiences, such as outdoor lunch.



Henry Puffer **#PufferPride**

Henry Puffer nurtures the wellbeing of every student at school and outside of school, by following responsible, respectful and safe behaviors. Programs and activities, such as Watch D.O.G.S., Puffer Families and Family STEAM Night, help students, staff and families live out these expectations and show their #PufferPride (check out their hashtag on X/Twitter)!



Fairmount **Monthly Matters Assemblies**

Each month, Fairmount held a schoolwide assembly to review responsible, respectful and safe behaviors, as well as to celebrate the many positive ways students exemplified these behaviors over the previous month. For example, students aimed to fill up the "Star Jar" each month to earn rewards announced at this assembly.



Highland **All-School Meeting**

Each month, all Highland students and staff gathered for an All-School Meeting, where the school recognized student birthdays and other accomplishments, as well as specific ways that students demonstrated being respectful, responsible and safe. Games and prizes added to the fun.



Hillcrest **Hillcrest Families**

When a student starts at Hillcrest, he or she is assigned to a “family”—a mixed-aged group of 10–14 students and a lead teacher—whom they will stick with for their entire Hillcrest journey. Each month, Hillcrest families meet for a social-emotional learning lesson. This program allows students to build bonds with classmates in different grades.



Whittier **Whittier Community**

Whittier works at building a community each and every day. By participating in class meetings, working toward school expectations through the Jaguar Jackpot PBSS program, joining in Student Council spirit days and community service projects, and strengthening relationships with one another, students and staff contribute to a strong Whittier community!



Indian Trail **One Book, One School**

The entire Indian Trail community read the book, “A Boy Called Bat,” together, and celebrated finishing it with a Family Reading Night. Not only did the school community come together for this program, the book’s subject matter helped kids develop a better understanding of neurodiversity.



Herrick Middle School **SSP Competitions**

Each month, every Student Support Period (SSP) classroom would team up and participate in friendly competitions against other SSPs, in an effort to earn the coveted Spartan Trophy. The classes bonded as they worked together to achieve their goals.



Kingsley **Buddy Program**

Kingsley’s upper grades partnered with lower grades and enjoyed activities, such as reading, playing and crafting. Additionally, fourth and fifth graders buddied up with students in the SASSED special education program, which helped foster inclusivity and diversity.



O’Neill Middle School **Senator Shout-Outs, Assemblies & Advisory Period**

O’Neill increases engagement within the school community through Senator Shout-Outs, which are certificates awarded to students who demonstrate safe, responsible and respectful behavior. The school also builds community during assemblies and the new advisory period, when students learn social-emotional, executive functioning and other life skills.



Lester **Monthly Lunchroom Celebrations**

Lester celebrated examples of positive student behaviors during monthly lunchroom meetings. These meetings built community, fostered a climate of growth, taught students about expected behavior, and celebrated the students.



Pierce Downer **PD Promise Keepers**

When staff members see a student keeping the PD Promise to be respectful, responsible and safe, they can give that student a PD Promise Ticket. Students place their ticket into a raffle to win small prizes. The PD Promise is a great way to reinforce positive behaviors.

Contact Information



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Behavioral Support Systems
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Tiffany Williams

Special Programs Coordinator
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* District 58's administrative office will move into the Downers Grove Civic Center this fall. After the move, the new District 58 Office address will be: 850 Curtiss St., Suite 200, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

Schools

Belle Aire

3935 Belle Aire Lane
630-719-5820

Principal: **Brent Borchelt**

El Sierra

6835 Fairmount Avenue
630-719-5825

Principal: **Jason Lynde**

Fairmount

6036 Blodgett Avenue
630-719-5830

Principal: **Dr. Lisa Niforatos**

Henry Puffer

2220 Haddow Avenue
630-968-0294

Principal: **Mark Leipart**

Highland

3935 Highland Avenue
630-719-5835

Principal: **Zachary Craft**
 Assistant Principal: **Sandy Cristobal**

Hillcrest

1435 Jefferson Avenue
630-719-5840

Principal: **Michelle Rzepka**

Indian Trail

6235 Stonewall Avenue
630-719-5845

Principal: **Tracey Ratner**

Kingsley

6509 Powell Street
630-719-5850

Principal: **Charles Brewster**
 Assistant Principal: **Dr. Eleni Gajewski**

Lester

236 Indianapolis Avenue
630-719-5855

Principal: **Katie Novosel**
 Assistant Principal: **Dr. Lauri Smith**

Pierce Downer

1436 Grant Street
630-719-5860

Principal: **Dr. Leland Wagner**

Whittier

536 Hill Street
630-719-5865

Principal: **Michael J. Krugman**

Middle Schools

Herrick

4435 Middaugh Avenue
630-719-5810
O'Neill
 635 59th Street
630-719-5815

Principal: **Dr. Steven Perkins**
 Assistant Principal: **Elizabeth McDonald**
 Assistant Principal: **Kelly Novotny**
 Principal: **Lauryn Humphris**
 Assistant Principal: **Danielle Bongiorno**



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District 58 2024–25 Calendar

August 16	First Day of Classes—Full Day
September 2	Labor Day *
October 8 & 10	Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences
October 14	Columbus Day *
November 5	Election Day *
November 8	End of First Trimester
November 27–29	Thanksgiving Break *
December 23–January 3	Winter Break *
January 6	School Resumes
January 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day *

February 4 & 6	Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences
February 17	Presidents Day *
February 21	End of Second Trimester
February 28	Teacher Institute Day *
March 31–April 4	Spring Break *
April 7	School Resumes
April 18	No School *
May 23	Last Day of School (half day for students; if no emergency days are used)

* Denotes no school.



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We hope you find this annual publication to be informative and useful, and we welcome your feedback. If you have a question about this or any other District 58 publication, please contact Community Relations Coordinator Megan Hewitt at mhewitt@dg58.org or 630-719-5805.